

## DEPARTMENT OF STATE

## Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: June 23, 1961

SUBJECT: The Berlin Problem - Meeting Held June 20, 1961

PARTICIPANTS: P - Mr. Tubby  
 Mr. Stern  
 P/PG - Mr. Harron  
 DOD/CASD - Mr. Sylvester  
 USIA - Mr. Sorensen  
 Mr. Parr

GER - Mr. Hillenbrand  
 Mr. Cox  
 U - Mr. Curtis  
 NSC - Mr. Owen  
 IO - Mr. Wilson  
 CIA Representative

## COPIES TO:

P - Mr. Tubby  
 P/PG - Mr. Harron (9)  
 DOD/CASD - Mr. Sylvester (3)  
 USIA - Mr. Sorensen (3)  
 NSC - Mr. Owen (2)

U - Mr. Curtis (2)  
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Mr. Tubby opened the meeting by stating that those with responsibilities on the psychological front needed to understand the basic issues of the Berlin problem and to be aware of the progress and nature of contingency planning so they could offer helpful comments and suggestions. He said that there was some doubt on the part of commentators and correspondents regarding the firmness of U.S. intentions, probably a carryover from the Laos and Cuban crises and as a result of the free city proposal of Senator Mansfield. He added that there were signs of uneasiness in West Berlin and disorientation of the West Germans and neutrals.

Accordingly, Mr. Tubby said, any information on where we stand and what is likely to be the course of events in the coming months would be useful. Although our legal position is important, he said, the personal fate of the 2 1/2 million West Berliners is of primary concern to us. He suggested, therefore, that we focus more on the people of West Berlin and review their situation from the days of the airlift to now. We should enlist the support of all information media in this endeavor. He particularly suggested that we try to get the networks to film features on Berlin.

Following is a summary of some of the main points made at the meeting concerning Berlin developments.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/NE

REVIEWED BY Houston

DATE 4/3/86

RDS or XDS EXT. DATE

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1. Confidence

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1. Confidence in the U.S. Position: There have been waves of increasing or slackening confidence in U.S. policy towards Berlin for many years. Events in other parts of the world have some bearing on this (i.e. in Cuba or Laos). The President's firm stand at Vienna and the U.S. reaffirmation of support at the NATO meeting in Oslo have been welcomed in West Berlin and West Germany. The forthcoming Aide Memoire will make a strong and clear case for our position. The Aide Memoire will be released after consultation with the French and British and the NATO Council. We hope that release could take place before the July 4 holiday weekend, but this may be difficult to accomplish.

2. Geneva 1959 Proposals: The United States made proposals on Berlin at Geneva in 1959 which were rejected by the Soviets. We are, therefore, not bound by these proposals. The press occasionally still refers to these proposals in speculative stories, and the point made above regarding the status of the Geneva proposals should be made clear.

3. Possible U.S. Military Preparations: Should it be decided that the U.S. military stance should be strengthened it is believed we should neither conceal nor dramatize our preparations. Over-dramatization might induce the Soviets to believe that we were trying merely to achieve a propaganda effect rather than seriously to improve our military posture. Our objective in strengthening our military situation would be to make our deterrent strength more credible to Khrushchev.

4. Mansfield Proposal: Mr. Tubby said many people in neutral countries and in the U.S. and other countries wondered why the security of West Berlin is not entrusted to UN forces. The UN "presence" might be considered even more of a deterrent, and be more difficult for Communists to attack propaganda-wise, than the U.S., UK and French forces now in West Berlin. Military or other pressure on West Berlin under the UN would bring a similar response to that at present, and might enlist even greater world-wide support. Messrs. Owen and Hillenbrand said that the position of West Berlin would be weakened if the UN were given security responsibility. It was suggested that it might be difficult for the U.S. to convince the Russians that we could respond quickly with deterrent strength if the UN were entrusted with the fate of Berlin and a crisis arose. The capacity of the UN to cope with infiltration and ambiguous outside forces is doubted. A third point is that the Russians have veto power in the UN and would undoubtedly pursue their Troika policy if there were a UN presence in Berlin. Those who would argue similarity with the Suez and Congo situations forget Berlin is in the middle of a Communist country and is surrounded by hostile forces. The basic strength of our position has rested on Western military forces in Berlin and the appreciation by the Russians and East Germans that an attack would create the danger of a general nuclear war. Nonetheless, it was the consensus that the "UN solution" did have a certain popular appeal and constituted a problem of psychological importance which should receive

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further study.

4. Soviet Grievance: Mr. Owen suggested that it is the Soviets who are creating the Berlin crisis by their pressures and that they should therefore suffer the consequences of world public opinion. This is an artificial crisis, one made in Russia.

5. The People of Berlin: It was generally agreed that it would be useful, as suggested by Mr. Tubby, to focus attention on the people of Berlin and their right to defend their freedom in accordance with the principle of self-determination. We should reiterate certain basic U.S. positions such as our belief that the ideal solution would be to solve the problem of Berlin within the framework of German unification by free elections. At the present time this is the most promising approach. We should reaffirm the positions already set forth by the President and the Secretary.

6. Possible Negotiations: For the period ahead it is important to convince the Soviets of our firm intentions regarding Berlin. Therefore, we should not be in the position of seeking negotiation. We should limit ourselves for the present, if required to respond, to the observation that we are always willing to negotiate but on the basis of the Western peace plan calling for free elections in all of Germany. Our response to the Soviet Aide Memoire will give us the guidelines needed for general comment on the Berlin situation.

7. Fall Back Positions: In the past we have been handicapped by discussions in the press regarding our fall back positions. Thus our negotiating position has often been vitiated before we have tabled our proposals. The Soviets are not handicapped in this way. Should at some future time negotiations be undertaken this tactical problem would deserve careful study and attention.

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